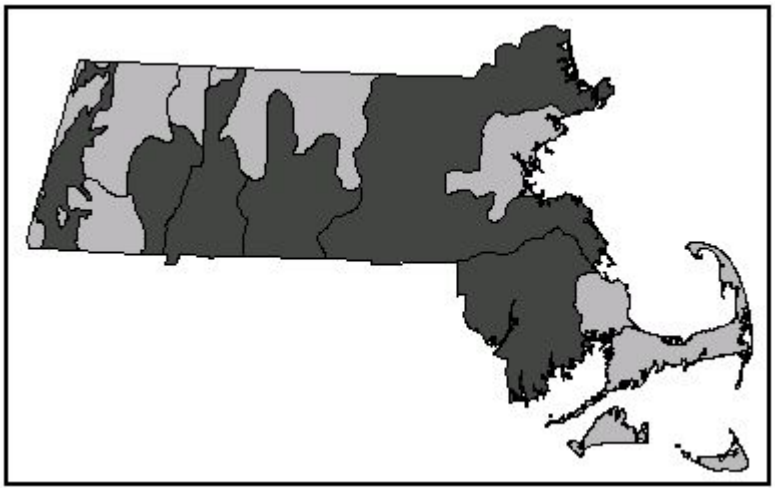
Community Name: **SHALLOW EMERGENT MARSH**
Community ELCODE: CP2A0A1300
SRANK: S4



Concept: Grass, sedge, and /or rush-dominated wetlands on mucky mineral soils that are seasonally inundated and permanently saturated.

Environmental setting: Shallow emergent marshes occur in similar settings to deep emergent marshes, i.e., in broad, flat areas bordering low-energy rivers and streams, often in backwater sloughs, or along pond and lake margins. Unlike deep emergent marshes, shallow marshes commonly occur in abandoned beaver flowages, and in some states they are named “Abandoned beaver meadows” or “beaver flowage communities.” The soils are a mixture of organic and mineral components. There is typically a layer of well-decomposed organic muck at the surface overlying mineral soil. There is standing or running water during the growing season and throughout much of the year, but water depth is less than deep emergent marshes and averages less than 6 in.

Vegetation Description: Vegetation composition is similar to deep emergent marshes except that shorter grasses, sedges and rushes dominate. Cat-tails, phragmites, and wool-grass, the dominants of deep emergent marshes, can occur but are never dominant. Tussock forming species, like tussock sedge (*Carex stricta*) and Canada bluejoint (*Calamagrostis canadensis* var. *canadensis*), often cover broad areas and form a hummock-hollow topography. Reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) can also occur. It is common to see tussock sedge-dominated marshes in old beaver flowages mixed with scattered shrubs like alder and spiraea. The shallow water typically has a mixture of bur-reeds (*Sparganium* spp.), sedges (*Carex* spp.), and rice cut-grass (*Leersia oryzoides*). Floating leaved plants, like the water-lilies (*Nymphaea odorata* and *Nuphar* spp.), and submergents, like pondweeds (*Potamogeton* spp.), occur in open areas, and duckweed (*Lemna* spp.) is abundant in still water. Based on species composition alone, it can be difficult to differentiate shallow emergent marshes and wet meadows, but they occur in different physical settings and hydrologic regimes [see concept description for wet meadows. More community data are needed on these communities to determine the indicator species of each.]

Associations: No associations have been described in Massachusetts.

Habitat values for Associated Fauna: Shallow emergent marshes are excellent habitat for muskrats. As with deep emergent marshes shallow emergent marshes provide important habitat for frogs and newts.

Associated rare plants:

ELEOCHARIS OBTUSA VAR OVATA	OVATE SPIKE-SEDGE	E
SAGITTARIA CUNEATA	WAPATO	E

From: Swain, P.C. & J.B. Kearsley. 2001. Classification of the Natural Communities of Massachusetts. Version 1.3. Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program, Division of Fisheries & Wildlife. Westborough, MA.

Associated rare animals:

BOTAURUS LENTIGINOSUS	AMERICAN BITTERN	E
CIRCUS CYANEUS	NORTHERN HARRIER	T
CISTOTHORUS PALUSTRIS	MARSH WREN	- WL
CLEMMYS GUTTATA	SPOTTED TURTLE	SC
CLEMMYS INSCULPTA	WOOD TURTLE	SC
EMYDOIDEA BLANDINGII	BLANDING'S TURTLE	T
GALLINULA CHLOROPUS	COMMON MOORHEN	SC
IXOBRYCHUS EXILIS	LEAST BITTERN	E
PODILYMBUS PODICEPS	PIED-BILLED GREBE	E
RALLUS ELEGANS	KING RAIL	T
SOREX PALUSTRIS	WATER SHREW	SC

Examples with Public Access: Nashua River marsh; Quaboag River WMA

Threats: Shallow emergent marshes are threatened by filling and dredging, impoundments that alter natural water-level fluctuations, and nutrient inputs from adjacent roads, fields, or septic systems. The invasion and spread of purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) alters natural community structure and composition.

Management needs: Efforts are needed to control the spread of purple loosestrife.

Synonyms USNVC/TNC: Carex stricta flooded herbaceous vegetation [CEGL004121]; maybe Scirpus acutus-Carex lasiocarpa herbaceous vegetation [CEGL006358].

MA [old name]: Southern New England nutrient-poor streamside/lakeside marsh [CP4A2A0000]; Southern New England nutrient-rich streamside/lakeside marsh [CP4A1A0000].

ME: Beaver flowage community; sedge meadow community?

VT: Shallow emergent marsh.

NH: Shallow emergent marsh [which they have subdivided into 5 subtypes: reed-grass meadow; tussock sedge meadow, medium sedge meadow, bulrush meadow, short graminoid-forb marsh].

NY: Shallow emergent marsh.

CT: Not described.

RI: Seasonally flooded (shallow) emergent marsh.

Golet & Larson, 1974: Robust shallow marsh (SM-1); narrow-leaved shallow marsh (SM-2); broad-leaved shallow marsh (SM-3).

Other: Acidic and circumneutral graminoid marshes [Weatherbee 1996]

Author: J. Kearsley **Date:** 7/21/99

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